

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 842

CS 009 974

AUTHOR Bruneau, Beverly J.
TITLE A Case Study of the Process of Reflective Coaching in Collaboration with a Kindergarten Teacher Developing an Emergent Literacy Program.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (39th, Austin, TX, November 28-December 2, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Classroom Research; Holistic Approach; *Kindergarten; Primary Education; Reading Instruction; Teacher Educators; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Improvement; *Teaching Methods; Whole Language Approach
IDENTIFIERS Categorical Data; Discrepant Case Analysis; Emergent Literacy; *Reflective Teaching; Reflective Thinking; *Teacher Collaboration; Teacher Researcher Cooperation

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to describe the process of reflective coaching as a means of assisting a kindergarten teacher in developing her own kindergarten program in which she stated she wished to begin to incorporate new strategies based on emergent literacy research. A kindergarten teacher and a teacher educator/researcher participated in the study. The researcher and the teacher worked together once weekly for 10 weeks from September through November as co-participants. The researcher modeled new kinds of teaching strategies as she worked with the children and also actively modeled her thinking while implementing the new strategies. Field notes were written to describe classroom actions of both participants and the children's involvement with written language. Weekly interviews were audiotaped to document the reflective coaching process as well as to understand the perspective of the participants. The data were analyzed through the process of categorical analysis to determine categories of meaning or semantic domains. Results of the case study indicated some interesting points worthy of reflection in terms of facilitating teacher development: (1) the teacher maintained ownership of the problems on which she wished to work; (2) problem-solving was a joint venture solved within the context of the teacher's classroom; and (3) reflection in action appeared to be highly important in helping the teacher make changes in her kindergarten program. (Twenty-six references are attached.) (MG)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED316842

A Case Study of the Process of Reflective Coaching
in Collaboration With a Kindergarten Teacher
Developing an Emergent Literacy Program

Beverly J. Bruneau
Teacher Development and Curriculum Studies
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44224

A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading
Conference, November 29-December 2, 1989, Austin, Texas.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Beverly J. Bruneau

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

CS005974

A Case Study of the Process of Reflective Coaching
in Collaboration With a Kindergarten Teacher
Developing an Emergent Literacy Program

Researchers studying the process of emergent literacy learning in young children have found that early print experiences should focus on children's prior knowledge and include active, constructive learning experiences in which kindergarten children engage in reading and writing tasks (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1982). From this emergent literacy research base, the International Reading Association (1986) has recommended that kindergarten programs offer children opportunities to engage in sustained reading and writing experiences which should include opportunities to read and reread favorite storybooks, opportunities to develop an understanding of letter-sound relationships through writing of their own meaningful messages, and opportunities to engage in functional usage of written language as a means of daily classroom interaction.

An emergent literacy based program stands in marked contrast to the type of instruction typically found in kindergarten classrooms in which basal readiness materials prescribe the reading program (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). An important difference between a skills-based program and an emergent literacy-based curriculum is in the role of the teacher. A skills-based program requires the teacher to follow a prescribed curriculum. A change to an emergent literacy program requires the teacher to take a more active role in planning learning experiences based on individual children's understanding of written language (Bruneau, 1989). However, Apple, (1987) and Shannon (1987) suggest that when teachers have developed a pattern of following a commercially prepared program, they may have lost ability, or confidence in their ability, to plan learning experiences for their students.

The ability of teachers to think carefully about the learning needs of their students, to plan activities designed to meet these specific needs, to function as a professional problem-solver, rather than a follower of a pre-written program has been addressed as a serious problem by writers concerned about the current role which teachers typically assume (Apple, 1987; Borko, Eisenhart, Kello & Vandett, 1984; Duffy, Roehler, & Johnson, 1986; Lanier & Littler, 1986; Shannon, 1983; Smith, 1981). Those advocating that teachers should assume the role of professional problem-solver argue that teaching is a complex activity involving multitudes of decisions which cannot be prescribed by "experts" (Bolster, 1983; Clark, 1988; Lampert, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). The teacher as a problem-solver is described as a role which better fits the complexities of classroom life, a role which allows teachers to interact more effectively with students.

Further, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in its position statement on appropriate practice (1987), has described the role of an effective teacher of young children as one which includes ability to plan and facilitate instruction based on prior knowledge of individual children. Teachers of young children need to think carefully about their own students' learning and use this knowledge in planning experiences. Effective early childhood teachers need to assume a professional problem-solving role.

The process of reflective coaching in which teacher educators actively model both teaching strategies and model thinking about teaching as they engage teachers in a problem-solving process, has been proposed as a process which may enable teachers to develop their decision-making ability (Oberg & Field, 1986; Schon, 1987). Problem-solving is at the heart of the reflective process which begins with the teacher attempting to solve a problem occurring within his or her own practice. According to Schon (1989), this initiates a kind of research, not research "for or about practice, but within practice." Elements of problem-solving include problem identification, generation of hypotheses of possible solutions, "trying-out" of possible solutions, and evaluation of the trials. Success in building reflective practitioners is defined by the increasing awareness of both coach and learner in specifying and framing problems, and in generating workable solutions toward these problems.

The teacher educators, as coach, assists the teacher in problem-solving through "advice, description, demonstration, and questioning" (Schon, 1988) as both work together within the teacher's practice. Action, demonstration or modeling, typically is the first level in which reflection is initiated. Action is important because during the beginning of the learning relationship words may carry different meanings for both coach and learner (Schon, 1988). Levels of reflection which follow action include a description of the action; a reflection on the description; and, a reflection on a reflection. According to Schon, coach and learner move through these different levels as they both participate in the learning process. Actually, the term coach is not quite appropriate as both participants become learners in this collaborative interaction based within real teaching situations.

Zeichner and Liston (1987) have suggested that the purpose of working with teachers to establish reflection is to enable teachers to better understand and control their own learning. Teachers need to understand why they do things in their classrooms. That is, as each teacher becomes more aware of beliefs, intentions, and goals, he or she may come to better understand classroom actions and better realize how beliefs influence classroom decisions (Oberg & Field, 1986). The goal of a reflective teacher development program would not be to assist

the teacher in establishing pre-defined teaching behaviors, but would be to help the teacher think carefully about individual goals and problem-solving ability.

A teacher maintains ownership of self-development through coming to understand his or her decision-making as an expression of personal beliefs and intentions (Oberg and Field, 1986). Awareness of intentions begins as the teacher has opportunity to talk about a classroom action and consider why that particular action occurred. Discussion about the "why" of actions taken allows the teacher to develop awareness of his or her beliefs and how these beliefs fit together into a teaching perspective. When practice is considered in relationship to a personal perspective, the teacher is then able to move to controlling decision-making.

The purpose of this study, part of a larger investigation, was to describe the process of reflective coaching as a means of assisting a kindergarten teacher in developing her own kindergarten program in which she stated she wished to begin to incorporate new strategies based on emergent literacy research. Two research questions framed this exploratory investigation:

1. What aspects of the reflective process appeared helpful or problematic to the teacher as she attempted to develop her literacy program?
2. What aspects of the reflective process appeared helpful or problematic for the teacher educator as she attempted to assist the teacher in developing her literacy program as well as her ability to think about her teaching?

METHOD

Participants

Two participants, a kindergarten teacher and a teacher educator participated in this study. Marlene had been teaching for thirty-two years, twenty-nine as a first grade teacher. She had taught kindergarten during the last three years having been requested to do so by her principal because he believed she would be able to teach without "depending on too many workbooks." Marlene was one of four kindergarten teachers teaching in a small town school located in a rural county school district. Marlene became interested in "making some changes in her teaching" while attending a mandatory in-service program sponsored by the district which was designed to assist kindergarten teachers in rewriting the kindergarten curriculum. As a result of this program, Marlene thought she would like to try some of the "whole language" ideas, develop her math program and was also interested in developing her use of learning centers as a means of "teaching" concepts.

The teacher educator, who was also the researcher had taught in both elementary and pre-schools for fifteen years, five at the kindergarten level. She was one of three instructors who had taught the in-service course Marlene was required to attend the previous spring. She had also supervised student teachers in a program in which reflective thinking about teaching was emphasized. This was the first time she had attempted to participate in reflective coaching. Although the researcher's role was that of a coach during the reflective process, she preferred the label researcher, because to her the term was more connotative of learning than the label of coach. She viewed herself primarily as a learner while participating in this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher and teacher worked together once weekly for ten weeks from September through November as co-participants. The role of the researcher as a participant evolved over the course of the study as both collaborated together. As the study progressed, the researcher modeled new kinds of teaching strategies as she worked with children and also actively modeled her thinking about implementing the new strategies. Field notes were written to describe classroom actions of the teacher and teacher educator, as well as the children's involvement with written language. Weekly interviews between the teacher and researcher were audiotaped to document the reflective coaching process as well as to understand the perspective of the participants. Both participants wrote about their concerns throughout the study.

The data were analyzed through the process of categorical analysis (Spradley, 1979) to determine categories of meaning or semantic domains. Secondly, the process of discrepant case analysis was conducted (Erickson, 1986). (Through this procedure assertions are derived through the process of induction as one reads the data searching for generalizations or statements which can be supported by evidence found within the data.) Once assertions were generated and arranged hierarchically, a search was then conducted of the data for confirming or disconfirming cases. The confirmed assertions were then compared with the domains generated through categorical analysis. Those assertions supported by domains were presented to and confirmed by the teacher participant. As data were collected through multiple sources (field notes, interviews, and written documents) and analyzed through multiple methods (categorical and discrepant case analysis) as well as validated by the participants, triangulation of data collection, and data analysis was achieved (Denzin, 1978).

FINDINGS

The findings will be reported as a case study of a kindergarten teacher and teacher educator working together through a process of curricular change and teacher development. Prior to the initiation of the reflective coaching process, the researcher worked with Marlene as a participant observer in her classroom to better understand her beliefs and current practice about teaching (Bruneau, 1987, 1989). Following is a summary of Marlene's expressed beliefs, classroom practice, and concerns which seemed especially pertinent to her at the beginning of the research period.

Marlene's Beliefs

1. A teacher needs to be in control of the classroom.
2. Teaching is telling ("stand-up teaching" is the most important kind of teaching).
3. Kindergarten children need to play. "Recent changes in our curriculum are making it harder to find time for the children to play."
4. The state and our district has mandated "all these skills we must teach to children."
5. Young children aren't ready to write. "Their little muscles aren't developed yet. I wait until the end of the year to teach handwriting, but their work is still not very good."
6. The phonics program we use is good because, "It doesn't require the children to write, simply to circle and underline."
7. "I really would like to make some changes in my teaching to allow children more time to play, but I don't see how I can do that and meet all the requirements."

Practice and Concerns

Marlene was able to create a kindergarten program which included room for all these somewhat conflicting beliefs. She organized a teacher-led instructional period in the morning in which she would introduce basic concepts such as colors, shapes, and numbers through stories and songs. (The skills she believed she was required to teach.) The children would then make a teacher-directed craft illustrative of the concept. During the afternoon, Marlene allowed children time to play at various centers including blocks, housekeeping, legos, puzzles, and small motor games. At this time, she often supervised "fun art activities" such as fingerpainting and printing. As Marlene did not believe children were "ready to write," she chose a phonics program which she began in January which required no letter

writing. Children worked in required readiness books during the last month of the school year and it was during that time that she began her "writing instruction."

As Marlene began a new school year (as well as participation in the study), she stated she wished to work on three teaching goals: to try some whole language activities, especially the writing; to work on her math program; and, to develop her centers so that children could learn through center instruction. She was particularly concerned about her teaching of writing. Not wanting to push children too early into extended writing, she waited until spring to begin. Although waiting allowed her to act consistently with her belief that kindergarten children should not be "rushed into handwriting," confining her instruction to a month did not allow time for children to learn to write their letters well. As she thought about the results she usually achieved, Marlene decided she would like to make some changes.

Marlene's interest in improving her math instruction originated from two sources. She stated her children have not in scored well on the standardized readiness test given each spring. Secondly, without her knowledge the district had ordered kindergarten math workbooks. Marlene did not wish to use the books, stating the only time she believed she could fit this kind of instruction was during center time. This would mean the children would lose time to play.

As Marlene considered how she might add more writing and math experiences to her program, she considered the possibility of using centers as a means of "instruction." (Using centers to teach kindergarten children was repeatedly recommended by instructors teaching the previous spring's in-service class.) As she already had developed a center format which allowed children to play, she thought she might be able to expand centers to also include some teaching of concepts. "I want to have an instructional center, I really do," she stated as one of her goals for this new school year.

Getting Started

As the reflective coaching period began, Marlene had to place her goals "on hold" and work on a problem of more immediate concern, establishing classroom management. Marlene declared the problem as "my main concern right now." Marlene was having difficulty maintaining the children's attention during her morning lessons, particularly when the children listened on the rug and also at morning's end when they would need to sit patiently at their chairs while others engaged in lunch time preparations. As Marlene talked about the problem, she appeared to believe that managing her class was more difficult this year

because so many of her children were boys, and so many of them had just turned five. The researcher saw the problem from a different frame of reference. She attributed the "troublesome behavior" to the large amount of time which children spent in sitting, and often just waiting, during the morning period. Each participant identified the problem, but saw the causes of the problem from a different perspective.

A second example of differing frames of reference occurred as both the researcher and Marlene engaged in generating hypotheses to work on building management. The researcher suggested that she could supervise the clean-up which would allow Marlene an opportunity to observe her class, "You know your program and you know the kids, maybe if you had a chance to watch, maybe you'd see something." The researcher hoped this would give Marlene opportunity to observe the classroom and see for herself how many children had nothing to do during clean-up. Marlene, however, interpreted the suggestion that she observe from a different frame of reference. "If you did some teaching, maybe I could see some way that you do it that could help me."

In attempting to work together toward solving the initial problem both participants began from different frames of reference in defining the cause of the problem and also in what each hoped Marlene might accomplish through observation of the classroom. Schon (1987) states such differences in frames of references occur often, particularly at the beginning of coach/learner relationships because the participants often do not interpret words in the same kinds of ways, particularly when a learner is not as familiar with certain concepts as perhaps the coach might be.

Problem-solving continued with other hypotheses for improving management being generated by both participants. Sometimes ideas built one on another. For example, when the researcher suggested that Marlene appoint a soap monitor to dispense soap so she could concentrate on other children, Marlene decided to add that to the duties of the door monitor. During the following week, Marlene tried out many of the suggestions and reported things had "settled down and were much better." She then began to think about working toward her goals, beginning with the writing center.

Marlene established a writing center during the first week of school as one of the eight centers in her room. She set aside a small table, supplied it with paper, crayons, and pencils and laminated a small copy of the ABC's to the table top. During each day, two groups of four children would have opportunity to "work" at the writing center. Although she had "set up the center," she was unsure as to what the children should do. "I just don't know what to do with children this age, their muscles haven't developed yet." Although Marlene had received

information through her in-service class of children's written expression emerging from drawing, she appeared to continue to view kindergarten writing experiences as "handwriting." She not only was not sure about the kinds of activities to encourage in the center, but also that the activities would really be appropriate for her "very young group."

Sensing Marlene's confusion in just what to do with the writing center, the researcher offered to model an activity with the children rather than merely talk about what to do within the writing center. That day the researcher engaged the children assigned to the writing center in making a book about the color of the day, "Red." The children drew pictures of their favorite red objects and dictated a sentence about their pictures. The papers were stapled together. A title page was attached and the children's names listed as authors. The researcher and the children reread the book which was then placed in the writing center. During the following week, Marlene continued that activity by having children "author" color books representative of each day's color.

Reflection in Action. Schon (1987) describes reflection in action as a process of providing a model of how something might be done. He states it is a necessary step in showing someone how to do some complex activity which can not be easily broken into isolated pieces and explained verbally. Through the process of observing reflection in action, an individual learns from observation what can not be explicitly explained. During the first three weeks, the researcher began to view herself as participating in reflection in action in two ways. First, she modeled teaching strategies. She demonstrated how small groups of children could put together a very simple book. Secondly, she designed a math center in response to Marlene's request. In implementing the center, she modeled teaching of appropriate math activities, but also a way of setting up the materials so they could be easily shared and a manner of explaining center usage to the children. Secondly, the researcher also modeled thinking about teaching. She talked about why she placed the kinds of activities she used in the center--activities which children could do independently and activities which included a variety of activities involving classifying, sequencing and counting. She talked about how she set out the activities so that children could easily take turns completing different tasks. Further, she evaluated the counting activities as being too easy, stating that almost every child easily recognized all the numbers and quickly counted out corresponding sets. Because of this, she stated she would develop counting activities involving larger quantities. Through talking about these decisions, the researcher hoped to provide a model for Marlene to use, herself, in planning subsequent centers.

Teacher's Perspective. During the first three weeks, Marlene had opportunity to talk about problems she believed were important to her in her own classroom. She was able to more clearly define at which points in the day she had difficulty with management, participate in generating solutions, try these out, and evaluated the problem as being under control. She was able to initiate work on all three goals of developing both a writing and math center and placing these in daily use. Through observing the researcher initiate activities, she felt more confident and was able to continue both centers on her own. However, as will be seen during the next phase, the implementation of the centers were to cause her increased frustration.

Researcher's Perspective. The researcher was pleased with two aspects of the process at this time. First, she believed that Marlene felt comfortable and was able to initiate each session with her own agenda of problems and goals. Secondly, she believed that Marlene had found their working together helpful in beginning to establish centers, the goals she had set for herself.

Although the researcher believed that she and Marlene had established a "good interpersonal relationship," she began to develop awareness of the differing frames of reference between Marlene and herself, particularly in how each participant interpreted the word "teach." When the researcher used the word "teach" to talk about center time teaching, she was referring to a facilitative model in which the teacher moves freely and interacts with children as they work through various activities (NAEYC, 1987). However, the researcher began to suspect that Marlene's use of the word "teach" involved direct instruction. As the initial phase ended, the researcher decided to address the belief which Marlene appeared to hold that teaching must be "teacher-led" instruction.

Further, the researcher worried tremendously about initiating the reflective process. It seemed to her that very little reflection was taking place at this time. It appeared that the majority of the time was spent in solving day-to-day kinds of problems. The researcher during this period did not see solving daily problems as being a particularly vital part of reflection. In fact, it appeared to her to inhibit reflection because, "There was little time left to be spent talking about beliefs about teaching." She also believed that in helping Marlene solve these daily problems she had been too directive. She was concerned that Marlene would develop a dependence on her for problem-solving and, therefore, decided she needed to do less of the problem-solving.

However, the researcher found herself in a dilemma as she considered her role in the problem-solving process. She wrote in

her journal, "I am now beginning to believe I am serving two conflicting roles, helping the teacher establish a certain kind of curriculum and still hoping to establish their ability to think about what they are doing and to plan for doing it themselves. Sometimes, I see a tiny spark of emergent literacy curriculum and I figure I better work hard to keep it. So I problem-solve to get it started. But in doing so, is she getting too dependent?"

Adding to her dilemma was the researchers' growing awareness of the need to provide modeling of new teaching strategies. For example, the math center was designed because even though Marlene had talked about teaching math in centers, it appeared to the researcher that she needed knowledge of how to construct a center in which children could learn independently. This appeared to the researcher to be a very directive approach. However, she reflected that this was the first step of reflection, the action level (Schon, 1987). "Maybe we need to get the actions done first," she wrote. Nevertheless, she was uncomfortable with dealing primarily at the action level.

Establishing New Ways of Teaching

Problem-solving during this phase focused on helping Marlene work toward her three goals of developing a writing center, developing a math center, and teaching through centers. Simultaneously, the researcher worked on her two goals of helping Marlene develop confidence in her ability to generate solutions and of introducing the idea that teaching does not need to be "teacher-led" instruction. Work in solving these problems proceeded in an integrated fashion during the four week period of mid-October through mid-November.

For example, problem-solving during the fourth interview focused on Marlene's identification of her problem in the writing center, "I still don't really know what to do with children this young." Simultaneously, the researcher attempted to work with Marlene in a manner which would not only help her writing center instruction, but would also help her develop ability to plan for future instruction. Instead of beginning with suggestions for activities, the researcher began by first asking Marlene to reflect on the purpose of the writing center.

However, Marlene did not state a purpose for the writing center. Interpreting Marlene's non-response as a lack of knowledge of purpose, the researcher supplied one, "To get the kids to express themselves through any kind of written work." Both participants could then generate ideas of activities and materials to place within the center once the purpose had been identified. During the following week, Marlene placed a variety of papers, more pencils, and scissors into the center as well as chalk which the children used to "write" on the adjoining blackboard.

A week later, Marlene continued to worry about helping children learn writing through this center. The researcher provided support through suggesting that she allow the children opportunity to "write and draw" during the center period. Then as children in other centers took time to clean-up, Marlene could assured move to the writing center and take dictation. The researcher Marlene that this would be adequate for "teaching" in the center at this time.

Further, the researcher modeled in action a means of organizing the center. At first, paper was stacked in the middle of the table. Some children would make a few marks on a sheet and put it back. Those who followed did not like to use previously marked paper. Marlene was shown a way to organize the center. Paper was stored in tagboard pockets hung on an adjacent wall. Children's work was also placed around the center for others to see. Pictures of Halloween characters were added to elicit Halloween stories and also motivated the first invented spelling, GRVB (The ghosts will say boo). With supplies arranged in a more systematic manner, children began to settle in to work more easily.

As November began, Marlene began to feel pleased with the center's operations and her children's learning. "They are no longer happy to just draw a picture. They want you to write those words." By mid-November, Marlene stated, "I'm beginning to see the progress the children are making in perceiving that what they have said can be written down and they can read it." It appeared that through working through developing this center, Marlene began to reframe her perception of "teaching kindergarten writing" from one of introducing correct letter formation to one of allowing children to express themselves through drawing and their own attempts at letter writing.

Further, Marlene had been concerned that the children were not ready to write. She did not want to push their "small fingers" into extended writing tasks. As the children continued to work in the center, Marlene not only commented on their learning, but also on the fact that they enjoyed working in the center, "They are happy to be there." During this six weeks' period, Marlene was not only able to develop her ability to use a center to introduce children to writing, but was able to observe children happily engaged in a learning experience she how felt comfortable in using.

Despite the fact that Marlene was now feeling good about the writing center, her frustration with the math center increased. Although Marlene had been able to see that she did not have to be "instructing" at the writing center to ensure learning, she felt differently about the math center. Marlene believed she needed to spend time at the math center "introducing and teaching required concepts." (The activities within the math center focused on skills which Marlene was required to write in her plan

book.) She stated her frustration, "It's hard to teach in a center. I just feel that if I'm not in one center, that's it. I can go check to see what someone is doing, that the children are staying in their centers and doing what they are supposed to, but I can't instruct." Not only was it difficult for Marlene to accept that children were learning skills without her being available to "instruct," she also wished to use center time to work with children in small groups doing some of her favorite art activities. This added to her frustration, "Getting around to every center, especially last week, with the art center when we were fingerpainting--I just had to be right there. I felt the other centers needed attention that I couldn't give them."

During this same period, the researcher began to work on her agenda of helping Marlene expand her definition of teaching to include a facilitative style. At first, she did so through modeling. That is, during the fifth and sixth weeks, the researcher worked with individual children as she moved among several centers. The researcher also talked about the important kinds of interactions she had with the children. "During center time, I sat with Michael and he read the story I read to group today. Robbie was in the writing center and he's now started to copy words, he's copying shape words. And Dustin, he's made a story about vampires, he did it without my staying there. I know I didn't reach everybody, but I felt I reached four children in an important way."

This modeling in action and modeling thinking about the actions was not sufficient. Marlene continued to express frustration with center time "teaching." During the sixth week, the researcher addressed the problem directly:

Researcher: "You know, we've been concentrating on the problem of getting kids to stay interested in activities at centers, but I've been thinking that maybe we need to talk about instruction being different during center time."

Marlene: "Right, when I think about instructing the teacher in me gets worried that I'm not... conducting, conducting lessons."

Researcher: "If we are going to think about instruction at center time as introducing something, having the kids do it, and them coming to a conclusion, maybe that's not an accurate picture of teaching during center times. Maybe it needs to be looked at as more of causal interacting."

Marlene: "You mean giving direction, but casually."

- Researcher: "Like today, I saw Gary in math, he was just messing around with the pumpkins (a counting game). It didn't look like he was thinking about it. So I went over there and asked him to count (the pumpkins). He couldn't so I got out an easier game and we worked on counting with numbers up to four."
- Marlene: "So that when you see the need you do something, right?"
- Researcher: "Right, and then I moved to the writing center, I was only there for a few minutes, but I could take dictation."
- Marlene: "Well, that's what I'm doing. I can sit with them and maybe if I think that they are doing something like just stacking blocks I can give them some direction to kind of help them along. You know, that's what I did during the first year (I taught kindergarten). They interacted with each other and we had a wonderful time. Maybe I can relax a lot."
- Researcher: "Right, you don't need to feel that you have to be here and conduct a lesson. Just interact in a more casual way."

The researcher evaluated this attempt as successful, particularly because of Marlene's response, "Maybe I can relax a lot." She believed that perhaps Marlene had enlarged her frame of reference about teaching to include a more facilitative mode. However, the interaction may not have been so much a restructuring of Marlene's thinking about teaching, but an affirmation of a kind of teaching Marlene had used, but did not consider to be valued as teaching. For example, Marlene stated that this was what she had been doing (as she currently worked with children) and in a previous teaching year when she hadn't felt "so pressured to teach all those required skills." Marlene may have readily accepted this definition because it reflected what she intuitively believed was teaching. Nevertheless, this interaction appeared to be extremely helpful to Marlene as she reflected on her center "instruction."

The researcher again addressed the problem of facilitative teaching during the following week by asking Marlene if she had an opportunity to think about it during the past week. Marlene replied that she had not had time to think about it. However, Marlene then went on to describe how she had interacted with children, "I worked with Chris making the giraffe (a counting

puzzle), he needed to count to ten. And Scott worked through matching upper and lower case letters. I think that I am beginning to feel that they are learning. So today, I checked a couple of times and they seemed to be real into what they were doing. And it was something that I felt they were learning from." Although she said she hadn't had time to think about it, it appeared that Marlene, in her actions, had begun to perceive teaching differently.

Reflection in Action. During this middle period, the researcher modeled a number of other teaching strategies, reading stories with predictable text, writing simple books for the children to "read," writing experience stories with the whole class, and making class books in which each child contributed a picture and a dictated sentence. Marlene began to use these activities as part of her morning lessons, involving children much more in print throughout the day. As Marlene grew in confidence in using these "whole language activities," she requested more help with math center activities, which was to become her major area of focus during the last three weeks of the study.

Teacher's Perspective. During this middle phase, Marlene had been able to make good progress toward two of her goals. She had been able to develop the writing center to a point where she felt comfortable about it being a valuable learning experience for her children. During the first few weeks, she needed a great deal of procedural information on "how to conduct the center." By the sixth week, she no longer had questions about this new activity. She also felt reading predictable stories was helpful. "I've never had a group so interested in books." Marlene was pleased with the development of her language arts program.

Teaching in centers had been very frustrating for Marlene who had initially been "trying to conduct lessons" at several centers (especially math and art) during any one day. The discussion about facilitative teaching had given her confidence in that what she was doing was, indeed, "teaching."

Researcher's Perspective. The researcher believed that the discussion of facilitative teaching had been timely and helpful. She wrote in her journal: "The discussion about instruction seems to have hit right with what Marlene was worried about. She wanted to be child-centered and provide center instruction, but was worried that the children were not getting enough learning. It seemed to validate for her that learning does take place and that someone else defines this kind of interacting as teaching seems important."

In contrast to the first three weeks when the researcher was concerned that she was being too directive, the researcher noted that during this middle month she had deliberately become even

more directive. She specifically modeled various kinds of teaching both in whole class settings and in centers, and she specifically attempted to introduce a different perspective of teaching during center time. Although she continued to be concerned with the directive/non-directive dilemma, she saw herself at this time as primarily providing needed information. "I see my role as being that of a model and probably during this short time (of the research period), most of the reflection will be reflection in action."

As this period ended, the researcher began to realize the limitations of teacher change. Although she believed that Marlene was able to engage children in reading and writing much more than in the past, the researcher would have liked to have seen change occur on a larger scale. She did not believe that she had the right to suggest such a change, "The time commitment that would be involved in changing the curriculum further would be tremendous. The desire to make a large change would have to come from the teacher. She is the one that would have to put the time into working on it."

Working Together

During the remaining three weeks, Marlene focused her concerns on implementing the math center. In doing so, she demonstrated the same need for support as she did when initiating the writing center. For example, Marlene decided to change the math activities to focus on money. She decided to "teach" money through use of a store format and prepared materials to do so. But she still believed she needed more information. Working together, she and the researcher defined areas she was concerned with: whether to actually set-up a store or use a table; whether to begin with all pennies or include a nickel; and, whether to "sell" objects which cost more than five cents. Having defined the uncertainties which had troubled Marlene, the researcher suggested she choose how she wished to initiate the store and observe it to see if she was pleased with her decisions.

Marlene put the store into action the next day and worked in it with all of the children over the course of the week. She evaluated its effectiveness, "I think things are going right well. I had just been doing pennies. But today I put in the nickel and showed Sandra how to do it when we worked alone. I showed her how the nickel was counted as five and then you just keep on counting pennies. I only had to show her once and she went right on and counted to 8. And Gary, he can't count, so we counted, we just counted pennies over and over." Marlene further added she would continue to use the center until she felt assured that everyone knew about pennies and nickels. At that point, she would attempt another center.

The researcher also worked on her new agenda, hoping to convince Marlene it might be helpful to assess student prior knowledge and use that information in designing centers.

- Researcher: "If this is going to be your goal, to work on a penny and a nickel, maybe you need to keep records so that you know who is learning what."
- Marlene: "I'm sure I'm going to have to do that. I've been trying to keep records for report cards this time. But I think in the next nine weeks, as I sit at centers, especially math, I'll have to check off some things, to make sure I'm not repeating myself."
- Researcher: "And then you'll know who has learned what. You know, when we test, we tend to test what we taught, we don't assess ahead. It might be helpful to know what the children already know."
- Marlene: "Right, we don't assess ahead. I never thought of that, to see what they already know. I'm sure it would be useful, but I'm not sure how you would do it. Would you do it at the first of the year?"

Although Marlene had stated this might be useful, the idea of assessing children's prior knowledge was brand new to her. Even as the researcher suggested a format for doing so, Marlene did not attempt to implement it in any way. She believed she simply did not have enough time to begin to check on children's prior knowledge.

Reflection in Action. During the final weeks, both the researcher and Marlene worked together interacting facilitatively with children at all centers during the center period. Both participants would then discuss the kinds of interactions they had with children during center time and reflected on these interactions. For example, when Scott wrote INDS (Indians), both shared the excitement of his beginning to use invented spelling. Marlene talked about observing similar work from three other children and decided she had several children who might be reading soon. As both teacher and researcher acted, described, and talked about what the description meant, both participants shared in reflecting on classroom learning which occurred during center time.

Teacher's Perspective. Marlene had begun the research period intending to work on three goals, the development of a writing center, the development of a math center, and the development of centers as a vehicle for teaching children. During the ten week period, she was able to initiate work toward all three goals. The writing center was well-established as a place where children engaged in "writing their own messages." For most, message writing was limited to drawing pictures and dictating their words to the teacher. However, several children were beginning to write on their own through invented spelling. Further, the children were engaged in reading and rereading class books in which each child contributed a picture and a message about various topics. Commenting on these reading and writing activities, Marlene stated, "I'm not sure what to expect of my children in this are by the end of the year, but I hope that they will be excited about books and reading and writing and will be able to begin to write their own stories."

Marlene had also made progress in teaching math concepts through center instruction. She decided to teach "required math concepts" through constructing a center for each major topic. Further, she developed knowledge about the kinds of activities which she might put in centers to help children learn independently and with each other.

Importantly, Marlene began to understand how she could use centers to "teach." She received affirmation that she did not have to "conduct" a lesson in each center, but that she could provide materials, observe children at work, and provide for one-to-one learning experiences within the center setting. Although Marlene stated she wished she knew more about "what to expect" from the children in terms of future learning, she stated she would continue to use this center approach to facilitate children's learning of literacy and mathematics.

Researcher's Perspective. The researcher wrote that she believed that Marlene had made "about as many kinds of changes as she could within the structure of her program." She noted that her attempt to help Marlene understand the importance of assessing children's knowledge did not match with Marlene's needs and concerns at this time, "When I introduced the idea, I did so because it seemed to me to make sense at the time, to figure out what children already know before designing new centers. However, Marlene was feeling overloaded trying to test children for report cards and was not ready to hear about it."

Overall, the researcher believed Marlene's attempt at center instruction was successful. She believed an important reason for this success was that Marlene had been able to try-out center instruction and in doing so receive positive responses from the children. These responses helped Marlene see that facilitative teaching could indeed produce learning.

The researcher appeared to have resolved her dilemma about providing direction for the teachers. "At first, I thought my role was more of encouraging reflection through providing the teachers an opportunity and a support system in which they could talk about their beliefs and ideas. I now view my role, at least in this first stage of reflection, as being a model. I have needed to demonstrate certain kinds of teaching and demonstrate ways of thinking about teaching. Maybe later, the modeling can be phased out, but at this time, I see the modeling as providing needed knowledge."

REFLECTIONS ON REFLECTIVE COACHING

One case study of the process of reflective coaching can only provide a description of one unique case. However, Marlene's story presents some interesting points worthy of reflection in terms of facilitating teacher development. Throughout the reflective coaching process, Marlene maintained ownership of the problems she wished to work on. Problem-solving was a joint venture solved within the unique context of Marlene's classroom. Reflection in action appeared to be highly important in helping Marlene make changes in her program.

The fact that Marlene maintained ownership of the curricular change is an important component of empowering teacher self-development (Bolin, 1987). The kinds of curricular changes Marlene made were not prescribed by outsiders but evolved from goals initiated by Marlene. Interestingly, although the research period ended in November, when the researcher visited in the spring, Marlene reported that she had continued with the writing and math center throughout the year. In fact, she enthusiastically shared written products, including classbooks and recent student journals written by the students. In this case, Marlene appeared to have owned the changes and kept her curricular innovations beyond the time frame of the study.

Not only did Marlene maintain ownership of the kinds of changes she made, but she was a co-participant in planning how to implement the changes. Changes were not directed, but were initiated through shared problem-solving. That is, both Marlene and the researcher shared in the problem-solving process of defining a problem as it uniquely occurred within Marlene's classroom, generating solutions together, trying solutions and evaluating the solutions. In this way, Marlene was actively involved in the kinds of thinking about teaching needed to begin to teach in new ways.

An important aspect of the problem-solving process which seemed particularly pertinent in this case is the importance of participants sharing similar frames of reference in approaching problems. For example, when Marlene began to talk about her problem of teaching in centers, she held the frame of reference

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

that teaching was a teacher-led activity while the researcher held the frame of reference that teaching could be a facilitative activity. As long as both participants used the word "teaching" from their own particular frame of reference, problem-solving of how to teach in centers could not begin. One advantage of the reflective coaching relationship would seem to be that through working together, over time, participants have an opportunity to begin to explore and understand each other's frames of reference. A primary responsibility of the coach would be to look for individual differences in defining problems and key terms.

Reflection in action also appeared to be a highly important feature which allowed Marlene to learn about new ways of teaching. Marlene, herself, requested that new teaching strategies be modeled and appeared to learn from this modeling. Schon (1987) describes this modeling as useful because it allows the learner to visualize what is often difficult to explain. Further, Schon states, "What is often easy for the coach is difficult for learners." In seeing an activity modeled, the learner can begin to repeat the modeling. In this way, the coach provides information to the learner through action and the learner learns through repeating the action.

The process of reflection in action appeared to be helpful in not only modeling teaching actions but also in thinking about teaching. An example of modeling thinking about teaching occurred early in the study in which the researcher set-up the math center. Not only was the center modeled as a teaching strategy, but the decisions made in setting up the center were also modeled by the teacher. Further, as the researcher attempted to help Marlene develop a more facilitative approach toward center teaching, she began to model this approach both in classroom actions and also in thinking about these actions. She would describe the student activities which she observed occurring during center time. As Marlene developed her ability to engage in facilitative interactions, she and the researcher acted, described, and reflected on this type of teaching. Marlene was able to share in the action as she developed ability to do so. In this way, the researcher not only provided a model but attempted to scaffold the model so that Marlene could also contribute as she was able. It would seem important to further study how to assist teachers in implementing changes through modeling classroom actions, thinking about actions, and scaffolding this modeling so that teachers can take over as ability develops.

The issue of scaffolding knowledge from the coach to the learner seems important to consider, particularly in addressing the researcher's dilemma of believing she needed to provide information, but also wanting to encourage independence on the part of the teacher. Specifically thinking about how needed information can be provided to a teacher, but presented in such a

way that the teacher feels empowered to take over would appear to be important if teacher independence is to be encouraged. It also is important to state that the researcher learned how important the modeling or action stage is in promoting reflective development.

The reflective coaching process as described in this study appears to be a promising way of facilitating teacher development of emergent literacy-based kindergarten program. It seems that an important way in which teachers can develop is through the process of working with another and in working together with a person as a coach. Through this personalized experience, the teacher in this study was able to raise questions and issues of personal concern as she initiated new practices in her classroom. Through participation in modeling in action, the teacher and the researcher able to develop an understanding of how to begin to transform her knowledge of children learning to read and write into classroom practice.

References

- Apple, M. W. (1987). The deskilling of teaching. In F. S. Bolin & J. M. Falk (Eds.), Teacher renewal: Professional issues, personal choices (pp. 59-75). New York: Columbia Teachers' College Press.
- Bolster, A. S. (1983). Toward a more effective model of research on teaching. Harvard Educational Review, 53(3), 294-308.
- Bolin, F. S. (1987). Reassessment and renewal in teaching. In F. S. Bolin & J. M. Falk (Eds.), Teacher renewal: Professional issues, personal choices, (pp. 6-16). New York: Columbia Teachers' College Press.
- Borko, H., Eisenhart, M., Kello, M., & Vandett, N. (1986). Teachers as decision-makers versus technicians. In J. A. Niles & L. A. Harris (Eds.), Changing perspectives on research in reading/language processing and instruction. (pp. 124-131). Thirty-Third Yearbook of the National Reading Conference, Rochester, NY: National Reading Conference.
- Bruneau, B. J. (1987, December). A case study of kindergarten teachers in the process of implementing a developmental kindergarten. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, St. Petersburg, FL.
- Bruneau, B. J. (1989, November). A case study of three kindergarten teachers varied implementation of a whole language reading and writing program. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, Baltimore, MD.
- Clark, C. M. (1988). Teacher preparation: Contributions of research on teacher thinking. Educational Researcher, 17(3), 5-12.
- Denzin, N. H. (1978). The research act. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Duffy, G., Roehler, L., & Johnson, J. (1986, December). Exploring the relationships between teachers' knowledge structures, teacher effects, and teacher education. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Austin, TX.
- Elliott, J. (1988, April). Teachers as researchers: Implications for supervision and teacher education. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of The American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittorck (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching. (3rd ed.) (pp. 119-61). New York: Macmillan.
- Ferreiro, E. & Teberosky, A. (1982). Literacy before schooling. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Goodman, K. & Goodman, Y. (1979). Learning to read is natural. In L. B. Resnick & P. A. Weaver (Eds.), Theory and practice of early reading: Vol. 1 (pp. 137-54). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.
- Harste, J. C., Burke, C. L., & Woodward, V. A. (1982). Children's language and world: Initial encounters with print. In J. A. Langer & M. T. Smith-Burke (Eds.), Reader meets author: Bridging the gap (pp. 105-31). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- International Reading Association (1986). Literacy development and pre-first grade, Young Children, 41(4), 10-13.
- Lampert, M. (1985). How do teachers manage to teach? Perspectives on problems in practice. Harvard Educational Review, 55(2), 178-94.
- Lanier, J. E. & Little, J. W. (1986). Research on teacher education. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd ed.), (pp. 527-69). New York: Macmillan.
- National Association for Education of Young Children (1987). Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth to Eight. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Oberg, A. & Field, R. (1986, April). Teacher development through reflection. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of The American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Schon, D. A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schon, D. A. (1988). Coaching reflective teaching. In P. R. Grimmett & G. L. Erickson (Eds.), Reflection in Teacher Education (pp. 19-30). New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Shannon, P. (1983). The use of commercial reading materials in American elementary schools. Reading Research Quarterly, 19(1), 65-84.

- Shannon, P. (1987). Commercial reading materials: A technological ideology and the deskilling of teachers. The Elementary School Journal, 87(3), 307-29.
- Smith, F. (1981). Demonstrations, engagements and sensitivity: The choice between people and programs. Language Arts, 58(6), 634-42.
- Spradley, J. (1979). The ethnographic interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Teale, W. H. & Sulzby, E. (1986). Introduction: Emergent literacy as a perspective for examining how young children become writers and readers. In W. H. Teale & E. Sulzby (Eds.), Emergent literacy: Writing and reading. (pp. vii-xxv). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Zeichner, K. M. & Liston, D. P. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. Harvard Educational Review, 57(1), 1-22.